

The Sand at the Silk-Washing Creek

Yijun Francis Guo

Song Ci, for Violin and Piano (or for piano solo)

After the poem of the same name by Shu Yan (A.D. 991 – 1055)

“It was the early summer of 2011, when I decided to take a break from composing my haunting Second Tang Poem which I was still trying to finish, and to compose something different in mood. At the moment I happened to come across the beautiful piece *Poem for Dance No.1* by composer *An-lun Huang* for flute and piano. One motif from the middle part of the piece attracted my interest and later I borrowed and used it as the opening motif of my own work here, based on the very motif the entire piece is developed from. The motif itself, *e-d-g-a*, consists of the four tones, *IV-III-V-I*, from a minor pentatonic scale, and aside from the motif per se there is no other reference to *An-lun Huang*’s piece – I have carefully written my accompaniment to the motif to distinguish mine from his accompaniment. Special thanks and tribute should be paid to *Mr. Huang* in inspiring my music.

After laying out the variants of the motif I started the process of putting the materials together, but at the same time I also began to seek a suitable poem from ancient Chinese poets which can be used as the setting of my music. After some search in my mind it turned out that one poem by *Shu Yan*, the famous poet of the Song Dynasty, is an ideal candidate. I had tried to find an English version of the

poem (or Ci, as an alternative), but in vain – they are either incomplete or badly translated. Thus I decided to translate the Ci myself, as presented in the following lines:

The Sand at the Silk-Washing Creek

A new poem, and a cup of wine

Old weather as last year, in the same pavilion

When would the sinking sun come back?

How hopeless I behold the flowers withering away

Though the returning swallows have elicited in me a sense of familiarity

Alone I wander, along the fragrant garden path

Also, spiritually this piece belongs to the same category as *Two Song Cis* by composer *Baozhi Yang (b.1935 -)*, to whom I should also pay my tribute here.

The work was originally composed for violin and piano but I made the piano solo version at first, as my usual habit, and then produced the duo version by separating the floating top melody from the piano solo version as the violin part.”

----- A note from the composer

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A new poem, and a cup of wine

9

mp *rit.*

*Led. *Led.

Old weather as last year, in the same pavilion

ppp *mp*

*Led. *Led.

pp *mp* *rit.*

*Led. *Led. *Led.

8va -----

ppp *mp* *mp*

*Led. *Led.

mp *mp*

*Led. *Led.

When would the sinking sun come back?

26 *cresc.* *mf* *f* *decresc.*

29 *p* *mf*

33 *cresc.* *cresc.*

*How hopeless I behold the flowers withering away
Though the returning swallows have elicited in me a sense of familiarity*

37 *f*

40 *pp* *f*

43

p *mf* *p*

*Ped. (A) *Ped.

8va

46

f *pp*

*Ped. *Ped.

(8va)

49

f *decresc.*

*Ped. *Ped.

(8va) Alone I wander, along the fragrant garden path

52

p

*Ped.

(8va)

55

rit. *p* ♩ = 90

*Ped. *Ped.

